

MINUTES
FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
September 24, 2009 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Dave Keck, San Juan County
Steve Christensen, City of Aztec
Cindy Lopez, City of Farmington
Chico Quintana, City of Farmington, Alternate

Members Absent: Julie Baird, City of Bloomfield
Nica J. Westerling, City of Farmington

Staff Present: Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Martin Lucero, MPO Associate Planner
Dee Dee Moore, MPO Admin Aide

Staff Absent: Mike Sullivan, MPO Officer

Also Present: Dr. Bob Widoe, NMDOT
Dave Martinez, NMDOT
Roshanna Moojan, NWNMCOG
Linda Sillers, San Juan Center for Independence
Paula Gruber, SJCI
Larry Joe, Navajo DOT Shiprock
Jim Maes, Citizen
Leonard Trujillo, Citizen

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Keck called the meeting to order at 10:11 am.

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 27, 2009 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Motion to approve the minutes from the August 27, 2009 Technical Committee Meeting was made by Mr. Christensen and seconded by Mr. Quintana. Motion passed unanimously.

3. RANK THE MID-RANGE REGIONAL BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS BASED ON APPROVED EVALUATION CRITERIA.

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item

Subject:	Ranking Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	September 16, 2009

BACKGROUND

- A list of regional bicycle/pedestrian projects were identified as part of the MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan.
- Evaluation criteria for prioritizing projects were adopted as part of the plan.
- Projects have been initially grouped into ranges in preparation for the ranking and prioritization process.
- The Technical Committee has ranked the short range projects.

CURRENT WORK

- The Technical Committee has agreed to rank the projects using a 0-5 point scale which is applied to each evaluation category.
- Projects that were voted in the top 10 by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Group (BPAG) will receive supplemental points.
- The Technical Committee will rank the mid-range projects on September 24.
- Staff will total the rankings and present the results.

ANTICIPATED WORK

- Rank long-range projects in October.
- Projects from all three ranges will be compared following the ranking exercises to determine a final prioritized list.
- Approve a prioritized list of bicycle/pedestrian projects as part of the MTP update.

ATTACHMENTS

- Evaluation Criteria.
- Mid-Range Project Ranking Template (provided under separate cover).
- Average scores from the short range project rankings.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Technical Committee rank the Mid-Range Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian projects based on approved evaluation criteria.

Discussion: Mr. Delmagori shared the overall ranking from the Short-Range Projects from last month. Mr. Delmagori proceeded to discuss each mid-range project's pros and cons to assist the Technical Committee members with questions they had regarding the evaluation criteria. Each project was ranked during the meeting by the Technical Committee members. After all the projects were discussed and ranked, Dr. Widoe shared that he has seen cities that have promoted Economic Development along their river corridors and have created successful public areas for recreation and events. Mr. Delmagori stated that the Long-Range projects would be ranked at the next Technical Committee meeting in October 2009. Mr. Christensen asked the MPO Staff to rank the projects to see how their rankings compare to the Technical Committee member rankings.

Action: The Technical Committee ranked the Mid-Range Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects and provided those forms to Ms. Moore.

4. REVIEW THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED FUTURE ROAD NETWORK PROJECTS

**FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item**

Subject:	Proposed Future Roadway Analysis
Prepared by:	Martin Lucero, MPO Associate Planner
Date:	September 16, 2009

BACKGROUND

- Staff developed a future road network map that identifies potential future road improvements and proposed road classification changes.
- Staff worked with each individual entity to evaluate each proposed road change and classification.
- Staff held four public meetings in August to seek input on the future road network map and public input on road network priorities.
- The Policy Committee reviewed the proposed road analysis at its September 17th meeting.
- The model has been calibrated for both the base year and 2035 model year using the newest adopted land use numbers.

CURRENT WORK

- Model runs have been performed for the base year and future 2035 model year.
- Difference networks have been created to show the impact of different road scenarios.
- A presentation of the scenarios will be discussed with the Technical Committee members on September 24.
- Project Evaluation is being considered with regards to impacts and possible future issues such as ROW acquisition.

ANTICIPATED WORK

- Calibrate midyear model for 2015.
- Perform model runs for the model year 2015.
- Prioritize road network based on evaluation categories, feasibility, and efficiency.

ATTACHMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Road network model runs and data analysis provided to the members under separate cover.

RECOMMENDATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It is recommended that the Technical Committee review the analysis of the proposed future road network projects.

Discussion: Mr. Lucero provided a PowerPoint presentation to show the various road network scenarios. The base model for all the scenarios included the completion of the East Arterial in Aztec from US 550 to NM 173, the Pinon Hills Bridge and six lanes for the ends of US64 in Bloomfield and Farmington. After Mr. Lucero described the first scenario, Mr. Christensen summarized his thoughts based on this presentation and the presentation to the Policy Committee on September 17, 2009. He spoke about the potential of building the Highline Road and the impact to US64 and NM516. Mr. Delmagori confirmed to Mr. Christensen that he was on the right track and that the point of this exercise is to try and show what impact other proposed roads will have on the existing network. Mr. Martinez cautioned the committee regarding reevaluating a project that the NMDOT has seen as a current existing need. Dr. Widoe expressed that the existing need on US64 is now and that any new alternate routes would take four to five years and that funding for new roads is extremely difficult to procure.

Mr. Lucero shared that the next scenario builds on the previous one by adding in the Northern Route which runs from Hood Mesa Trail north of Farmington to NM516 North of Aztec, at approximately Cedar Hill. This road would be built as limited access, two lanes and a high speed road. The next scenario Mr. Lucero showed was making US64 six lanes all the way from Farmington to Bloomfield. This shows that the traffic moves through the East Arterial across the mesa on the Highline Road to CR350 and continues on CR350 to US64.

Continuing on Mr. Lucero removed the Highline Road and explained the increases and decreases in traffic on existing roads. He proceeded to go through the same steps with removing sections of the Northern Route and also how all the roads would function if everything was built. Dr. Widoe stated that having this will be most important over the next 5 years as EPA standards become more stringent and the greenhouse gases become more prominent. These are the scenarios that will be needed to meet environmental and transportation criteria for future funding.

Action: The Technical Committee reviewed the proposed future road network project analysis.

5. REVIEW THE TRANSIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND POTENTIAL TRANSIT EXPANSION OPTIONS

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item

Subject:	MTP Update Transit Plan
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	September 16, 2009

BACKGROUND

- The transit system will be analyzed as part of the MTP Update to ensure that transit service meets future demand.
- A needs assessment for Red Apple has been started.
- Staff has collected Census data for vehicle ownership and for elderly, disabled, and low-income populations by census tract to better understand potential transit demand.

CURRENT WORK

- Potential transit demand based on Census 2000 data has been projected out to future years.
- Staff is using land use data to determine areas of future population and employment growth.
- Transit expansion options will be presented that show links among the growth areas.
- Maps and data will be presented to the Technical Committee members at their meeting on September 24.

ANTICIPATED WORK

- Develop annual ridership projections based on future transit demand.
- Link future growth areas with transit expansion options.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Technical Committee review the transit needs assessment and potential transit expansion options.

Discussion: Mr. Delmagori shared a handout with members regarding the census track numbers that provide the basis for potential transit demand. The top five census tracks with high levels of poverty, elderly, and low income populations in the MPO Area were highlighted and a location description was provided. They included the south end of Farmington, the East Central part of Farmington, Downtown Farmington, and areas in Crouch Mesa and near Bloomfield.

Anticipated population growth by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) was overlaid with the existing Red Apple Transit Lines. The maps also identified spur or feeder routes and potential transit hubs as expansion options. The feeder routes are intended to serve as many of the growth areas as possible. The potential transit hubs could be located at places like Safeway in Aztec, the Library/Cultural Center in Bloomfield, the Fairgrounds/Casino near McGee Park, the intersection of CR350/390 in Crouch Mesa, the intersection of CR350/NM516 in Flora Vista and at US64/CR6500 in Kirtland. All proposed feeder routes would terminate at these hubs. Dr. Widoe mentioned that it would be good to be kept apprised of the external impacts such as Raytheon, Napi and the transit system in Ignacio.

Action: The Technical Committee received the report.

6. RECEIVE A REPORT FROM NMDOT

Discussion: Mr. Martinez provided updates to the ARRA program. The San Juan County project being submitted for authorization will be processed in October. Mr. Keck asked whether he should wait regarding the PS&E meeting with Benny and Mr. Martinez said no, that everything was ready to go and he would provide Benny with the certification information. The City of Bloomfield project provided their Right of Way certifications so only the environmental certifications are outstanding and the NMED is working on that. The City of Aztec has a right of way certification in process however the project has been authorized. The City of Farmington project still needs two certifications, the environmental and the right of way, however the DOT is working on those now. Mr. Quintana asked about the reporting process that is to start on October 1st. Mr. Martinez had not heard of an October 1st deadline for project reporting but will research that issue and get back with everyone with an email. Mr. Martinez shared that John McElroy will be retiring at the end of October.

Dr. Widoe congratulated everyone on successfully accomplishing the ARRA Project processing. Some areas are having difficulty providing the criteria and may stand to lose their share of funding. Dr. Widoe stated that the nationwide rescission of \$8.7 billion is still being looked at in New Mexico where the state share is \$82.3 million. The additional PL funding for the MPO's this year from the unobligated planning funding appears to be safe.

Mr. Martinez reminded everyone that training for entities that are awarded an ARRA project will be provided for more than one person from each entity and the training would be for the LCP Tracker and the B2GNow Software that is a requirement for the reporting requirements.

Dr. Widoe shared that within the next month the Technical Committee and the MPO Staff would have an opportunity to look at the Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan. Also, the MPO Handbook that he has been working on will be ready for comment and review in the next couple of weeks.

7. RECEIVE A REPORT OF THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) PROGRAM

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item

Subject:	Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	September 16, 2009

BACKGROUND

- The City of Farmington was awarded a SRTS Phase 1 grant in July.
- The SRTS Committee in Farmington meets monthly to discuss upcoming activities.
- Active school participants include Mesa Verde, McKinley, and Apache schools.

CURRENT WORK

- Student arrival counts are being taken at the three participating schools during the month of September to track the number of students who are dropped off, take the bus, or walk/bike.
- Evaluations of areas of concern at the schools are being conducted this month.
- The SRTS Committee is developing a 'Walk Across America' program activity for the school year.

ANTICIPATED WORK

- Develop an Action Plan and apply for SRTS Phase 2 funding.
- Participate in the October 7 International Walk to School Day.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Technical Committee receive a report on the Safe Routes to School program.

Discussion: Mr. Delmagori stated that the student arrival counts were completed at all three participating schools and the schools will be participating in a separate Walk Across America program. October 7th is the International Walk to School Day and will be reported on by the Daily Times newspaper.

Action: The report was received.

8. RECEIVE A REPORT ON RED APPLE TRANSIT

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item

Subject:	Red Apple Transit Update
Prepared by:	Martin Lucero, MPO Associate Planner
Date:	September 16, 2009

RED APPLE UPDATE

- Overall ridership reached a new peak in ridership of 11,610 passengers in July.
- Farmington saw a 5.60% increase in ridership over the previous month.
- Aztec, Bloomfield, and Kirtland all saw increases in ridership over previous months, with 34.87%, 8.52%, and 28.94% respectfully.
- Aztec and Kirtland had increases over the same period last year with 2.50% and 108.97% respectfully.
- Bloomfield had a decrease of -20.70% over the same period last year.
- The ridership report is attached.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Technical Committee receive a report on Red Apple Transit.

Discussion: Mr. Lucero discussed the ridership numbers had reached an all time high of 11,610 in July. The only route to see a decrease was Bloomfield and at this time the MPO Staff is looking at possible reasons such as bus capacity or timing issues. Mr. Christenson asked why the same drop was not experienced along the other regional routes such as Bloomfield. Mr. Lucero indicated that maybe the other routes have not hit the same overall volume in ridership as Bloomfield. The Policy Committee directed the MPO Staff to start the transit study and follow-up with a consultant if necessary to evaluate the system.

Action: The report was received.

9. INFORMATION ITEMS

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item

Subject:	Information Items
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	September 16, 2009

INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. **Four Corners Air Quality Meeting.** The New Mexico Environmental Department hosted a meeting on regional air quality in Durango on August 27. Initial results of measures to reduce ozone were presented and discussed. At this time, most mitigation strategies are focused on reducing emissions at power plants and from the oil/gas industry.
- b. **VISUM Advanced Training Course.** PTV America, the company that owns the VISUM travel model program, will provide a one day training on the software in Santa Fe on September 29.
- c. **MPO Quarterly.** The Santa Fe MPO will host the next MPO Quarterly on September 30.
- d. **Statewide Traffic Count Program Meeting.** On October 1 in Santa Fe, the NMDOT Traffic Count Bureau will hold a statewide meeting to review traffic count programs, procedures, and formats.
- e. **Traffic Model Training Work Session.** Staff would like to organize a Work Session to provide a general discussion on traffic modeling and to present some of the elements of the VISUM traffic model.
- f. **Other.**

Discussion: Mr. Delmagori provided information regarding the Air Quality Update meeting that was held in Durango last month. Mr. Lucero and Mr. Delmagori will be attending multiple trainings in Santa Fe the last week of September. Mr. Delmagori stated that the November meeting will be a joint session of the Policy and the Technical Committees. The meeting will be in Aztec on November 19th and will be from 10:00am to 2:00pm with lunch brought in for members. Mr. Delmagori introduced Jim Maes who is with the Forest Service but is presenting today as a citizen.

Mr. Maes provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding expanding, upgrading or reconstructing NM173 between Aztec (US550) and Navajo Dam (NM511). This idea was first introduced about 12 years ago and approved by the RPO at that time. Various data collected for the road during 2003 to 2007 shows that there were two fatalities and 24 accidents just at mile marker four. The increase in the Oil & Gas Industry has contributed to the safety concerns because of the heavy equipment deteriorating the roadway. The narrow roads are unequipped to handle recreational boats, vehicles and school buses. Mr. Maes stated that the current conditions of the road are unable to handle the capacity of the increased traffic flow with deteriorating bridges, cattle guards and dips, all of which compound the concerns. Certain dangerous situations include limited vision over hills, cattle, and stalled or turning vehicles on the road. These conditions are increased during the winter when ice is present. Proposed changes would provide faster access for emergency responders, greater economic development, and increased business to local shop owners at Navajo Dam with revenues from the State Park. The preferred scenarios would be to: first reconstruct the road to four lanes, reduce dips and add turnouts; and second widen shoulders, reduce dips, and add passing lanes. There is a definite need for a signal at the intersection of US550 and NM173. Mr. Maes concluded his presentation with

suggestions on funding the project, whether it is through cooperative funding, through private business owners, the oil/gas industry, stimulus funding, or the State Highway funds. Dr. Widoe mentioned the possibility of safety funds could apply to this project.

Mr. Martinez stated that he was working on the accident/crash statistics and would provide that information when it was complete. Mr. Leonard Trujillo added personal history about the beginning on the road and the importance of the Five Mile Bridge. Mr. Christensen commented that the first mile of NM173 is currently part of the East Arterial project and that other phases of that project will be dependent on additional funding. He also asked Mr. Maes if he would present to the City of Aztec Commission. Dr. Widoe suggested completing a Project Information Form (PIF) and a Safety Application for this project. Mr. Delmagori added that the MPO would incorporate this into the MTP process and eventually it may end up in the Transportation Improvement Program.

Action: The report was received

10. BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS AND STAFF

Discussion: Mr. Keck stated that Mr. Pete would no longer be able to be the alternate for San Juan County and TJ Richards would be assuming that responsibility. There was no business from the members or staff.

11. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Discussion: Mr. Larry Joe, planner from Navajo DOT located in Shiprock, gave an update to the Committee. The Navajo Nation currently has over 600 unpaved roads and only the state routes are paved. Safety issues have been determined by the parents and school administrators regarding the bus routes and stops for the children that are attending school outside of the Navajo Nation. Mr. Joe is looking to partner with other entities and share resources to help improve their roads. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has the responsibility to blade the dirt roads but don't have the equipment and personnel to keep up with the maintenance. Mr. Joe stated that Shiprock is starting to work on a comprehensive plan. Mr. Keck stated that funding in the amount of \$270,000 was received for the design for the bridge at the Chapter House. The proposal will be submitted in early November and suggested speaking with Dave Martinez about other alternatives. Dr. Widoe shared that it was great to see interaction between the Navajo DOT, the RPO and the MPO.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Discussion: Mr. Christensen made the motion to adjourn, Mr. Quintana seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 12:27pm.

Dave Keck, Chairman

Dee Dee Moore, MPO Admin Aide